

BOSTON DIGITAL BRIDGE FOUNDATION



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THEIR POTENTIAL

# Technology Goes Home @ School Builds Parental Involvement

Case Study: O'Donnell School SY '05- '06

## About the Technology Goes Home @ School Program:

TGH@S is administered through the child's Boston Public School. Families attend an initial informational meeting at their child's school, and program training is in a group setting with peers. The child's teacher conducts the training, creating an opportunity for parents and teachers to communicate regularly and get to know each other.

The goals of the TGH @ School program are:

- To help children improve their academic performance
- To encourage parents and children to work together toward a common goal
- To enhance the relationship between parents and teachers
- To help adults prepare for better employment opportunities

## About the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation:

The Foundation provides technology training and computers to Boston families and students by supporting collaborations of community based organizations and schools that encourage life-changing attitudes in parents and students.

For more information:

<http://www.bostondigitalbridgefoundation.org>

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Boston Public Schools



CITY OF BOSTON

Thomas M. Menino

Mayor

**The O'Donnell Elementary School** in East Boston is using technology training to create a culture of parental involvement. The results are both impressive and surprising – for parents, teachers, and the school as a whole. The O'Donnell School has graduated over 40 families in the three years that it has participated in the TGH@School program.

“Working with the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation’s Technology Goes Home@School program, (TGH@S)” explains O'Donnell’s **Principal, Dr. Robert Martin** “we offer 12 weeks of computer training for students and their parents. Three years ago, we started with the idea that de-mystifying computers would be a good thing. What we’ve discovered is that this powerful learning experience also de-mystifies the school. As parents meet teachers and other parents, they become engaged in other school activities and more willing to take on leadership roles. In fact, virtually all of the school’s site council parents and a majority of the parent council members are TGH@S alums.”

“TGH@S has clearly become a gateway to greater parental involvement,” says **Ellen Cooper**, O'Donnell’s Computer Teacher, a TGH@S instructor, and a 2005 Boston Public School Teacher of the Year. “For many of our parents, English is a second language. At first, they were shy about interacting. But as they found that the teachers were actually there to help, shyness gave way to confidence.”



(l to r) Ellen Howe, Fourth Grade Teacher; Dr. Robert Martin, Principal; Ellen Cooper, Computer Teacher and a 2005 Boston Public School Teacher of the Year

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*-Dr. Robert Martin,  
Principal*



School Site Council (l to r) Dr. Martin and TGH@S alums, Jeremiah Rosa, Martha Velez, and Gloribell Mota. School Site Council meetings address issues ranging from how to handle the school’s budget to analyzing which classrooms may need renovations to looking at curriculum with a critical eye.





Tech Boston Assistant, Christina Osorio works with student, Sonia Pena on her PowerPoint Presentation, "What is a tsunami?"

**Tech Boston**, bi-lingual high school students served as TGH@S assistants and were instrumental in bridging the language gap. The younger students looked up to these interns, who became positive role models. Students also helped overcome language barriers, often serving as interpreters for the parents.

**Martha Velez**, mother of a 4th grader, says, "TGH@S is helping me learn English. I've also signed up for the school's ESL class." In addition, Martha has become an active member of the School Site Council.

Parent, **Gloribell Mota**, adds,



Shawnda and Amber Pugliese put final touches on their PowerPoint project titled "Hurricanes" They will make their presentation to their class on the final night celebration of their 12 week TGH@S program.

"I loved the computer classes and the collaborative learning with my son, Edward. It made me feel connected to the school, the teachers, and other parents. That's why I joined the School/Parent Council and the School Site Council."

"You can just see the comfort level of the parents go up," says 4th grade teacher **Ellen Howe**, who is a TGH@S instructor. "And as it does, you see their involvement go up. The lesson



Martha Velez and her daughter Michelle Perez. Martha is a member of the School Site Council and Parent Council, and has become an advocate for other Spanish speaking families. Michelle has been accepted to Advanced Work Class for next year.

plans for TGH@S are based on the school curriculum, and this gives parents insights into what their children are studying, as well as opportunities to discuss school curriculum with teachers. A mutual respect grows as kids and parents learn together."

**Dong Young Kim** is happy that he and his 4th grade son are improving their English and writing skills through TGH, and he is also finding that it's fun to help out with school field trips and meet other parents.

**Shawnda Pugliese** says that TGH has brought her closer to her daughter



Ellen Howe works with Dong Young Kim, his daughter, Jung In, and his son, Joo Yoeb during their after-school class.

and made it easier for her to attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings.

"Parent involvement is crucial," **Principal Martin** says. "TGH opens a door so parents feel involved and empowered. They appreciate the teachers, value the educational experience for their kids, and want to be more involved. They take on leadership roles and it makes all the difference in the world. When parent are involved, we see kids become better learners and teachers become better teachers. The technology training is great. The increased parental involvement is even better. It's a huge bonus."



The Hugh R. O'Donnell Elementary School is located in East Boston and has an enrollment of 214 children, of which 73% are minorities and 91% qualify for the free and reduced school program.